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Locational Relationality in Hedi Slimane and Helmut Lang

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WHERE THE BOYS WHO KEEP SWINGING ARE NOW: LOCATIONAL RELATIONALITY IN HEDI SLIMANE AND HELMUT LANG[1]

SUSAN INGRAM

Abstract | *This article illustrates the mechanisms by which Berlin and Vienna have come to figure differently in the global fashion imaginary. It establishes the stylistic locational relationality of Hedi Slimane and Helmut Lang, two fashion designers known for distinctive styles that resist the mainstream of bourgeois respectability. The relational nature of their locational identities—Slimane's attraction to Berlin and Lang's rejection of Vienna—is tied to the cities' urban imaginaries, which work by making particular periods and styles of the cities' histories hegemonic.*

Résumé | *Cet article illustre les mécanismes par lesquels Berlin et Vienne en sont venus à figurer différemment dans l'imaginaire mondial de la mode. Il établit la relation locale stylistique de Hedi Slimane et Helmut Lang, deux dessinateurs de mode connus pour leur styles distictintifs qui résistent aux normes prévalentes de la respectabilité bourgeoise. La nature relationnelle de leurs identités géographiques—L'attrait de Berlin pour Slimane et le rejet de Vienne pour Lang—est liée à l'imaginaire urbain des deux villes, ce qui se manifeste en rendant hégémoniques des aspects particuliers des époques et du style de l'histoire des deux villes.*

Some cities lend themselves to better comparisons than others. As the capitals of the two German-speaking empires (the Prussian and Habsburg, respectively), Berlin and Vienna are well positioned for comparison, particularly due to the very different ways the two cities have come to figure in the global popular imaginary on account of their very different historical trajectories. Upstart Berlin with its background as a *Garnisonstadt* (garrison city) has become the "poor but sexy" clubbing capital of Europe (see Bauer and Hosek), while *Residenzstadt* Vienna—the city that effectively served as the capital of the Holy Roman Empire from the time the Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II established his residence there in the early 17th century to its dissolution by Napoleon in 1806 and as home to the Habsburgs for most of the past millennium—, steadfastly remains a capital of faded imperial splendor (Figures 1 and 2). These imaginaries inform the ways in which these two cities' respective fashion systems have responded to contemporary global pressures brought about by flows of capital, goods, and people, as well as the way the global fashion system has engaged with them. As of the time of writing, the Sartorialist *still* had not visited Vienna, while there are 40 images from Berlin on his site.[2]

The mechanisms by which Berlin and Vienna have come to figure differently and the role of visual style culture in both forming and greasing the circuits underpinning their respective

Figure 1 On the Street… Mitte, Berlin (thesartorialist.com)

urban imaginaries are the subject of this contribution. Building on both Doreen Massey's argument about the identity of modern places being constituted as much by their relation with other places as by anything intrinsic to their location (Massey) and Rosi Braidotti's understanding of a place as "an embedded and embodied memory: it is a set of counter-memories, which are activated by the resisting thinker against the grain of the dominant representations of subjectivity" (Blaagaard and Tuin 203), I juxtapose the career paths of two designers whose work resists the mainstream of bourgeois respectability: Hedi Slimane (Figure 3) and Helmut Lang (Figure 4). I show how their relations have, in the case of Slimane and Berlin, and have not, in the case of Lang and Vienna, come to play a role in constituting these cities' global identities.

The relational nature of these locational identities and their (visual) styles is thus shown to be intimately tied to the cities' urban imaginaries, which work by making hegemonic particular periods and styles of the cities' histories. In positioning Lang's or Slimane's work as resistant, I am not contesting their prominence *as* fashion designers but rather pointing to the relation between the radical nature of their visions and their associating, or not, with the urban imaginaries of Berlin and Vienna. As Bradley Quinn pointed out in his review of the *Radical Fashion* exhibition at the Victoria & Albert Museum in 2001-2002, radical is a relative concept that, when applied to uncompromising collections

Figure 2 Café Griensteidl on the Michaelerplatz in Vienna (photo: M. Reisenleitner)

such as Lang's, "implies a sudden thrill of meanings that themselves quicken, mutate, rupture,

Figure 3 Hedi Slimane (Victor Soto)

Figure 4 Helmut Lang, 2008 (courtesy of HL-ART)

fissure, or collapse. Fashion designers working in this vein reshape the body, design according to philosophical and intellectual concerns, push boundaries, challenge perceptions, and usurp conformity to give form to extravagant projects of the imagination" (Quinn 442). What interests me here is not so much the collections themselves, about which Fashion Studies scholars have made many insightful observations (Rees-Roberts,"Boys Keep Swinging"; Bowstead; Arnold, "Heroin Chic"),[3] but rather the relations between the imaginations underpinning these works and the cities in which they came into being. In the trend-setting work of both Slimane and Lang:

> Conspicuous consumption is refused in favor of dress strategies that are disquieting and unknowable by those outside the coterie of youth culture, a form of resistance to imposed definitions of identity and lifestyle. They emit a feeling of being adrift from society as a whole; the youth culture that fashion was drawing upon becomes a series of satellites that deny inclusion in establishment ideals. (Arnold, "Heroin Chic" 286–87)

Yet Berlin's urban imaginary has been able to take that resistance into its own urban imaginary, while Vienna's has not. As importantly *illustrated* here, the experiences of these designers and their relations to these cities can help us understand, and *see*, why.

Helmut Lang is the fashion designer associated with Vienna to have achieved the greatest renown internationally, but he did not do

so as a specifically Viennese fashion designer. While Lang may have started out in Vienna with a boutique called Bou Bou Lang in 1979, he used the success that his use of unconventional materials and minimalist utilitarianism in designs garnered as a springboard to get to Paris, not to mention his "Viennese-ness,"[4] which is not intended as a stylistic marker but simply a reflection of his background. The connection helped him to show a collection in 1986 in conjunction with the monumental "Vienne 1880-1939: L'apocalypse joyeuse/Vienna 1900/ Traum und Wirklichkeit" exhibition at Centre Georges Pompidou that brought a renewed appreciation of Vienna's Jugendstil/art nouveau cultural heritage and popularized it elsewhere (Ingram and Reisenleitner, *Wiener Chic* 162). In Paris, he founded his own label and showed his first ready-to-wear collection before decamping for New York, where "in April 2000, he became the first non-American designer to become part of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA), a group which had named him Best International Designer of the Year in 1996" (162), and began working with Jenny Holzer on the design of his boutiques (Figure 5). Now a prominent component of the Fashion Studies canon for his experimental *séances de travail* and early use of the internet, "it was Lang's cool, urban silhouettes, marrying basic shapes with edgy color combinations and advanced technological fabrics, which were both the crucial look for fashion insiders, and the key influence on other designers, eager to find a new vision of the modern" (Arnold, *Fashion, Desire and Anxiety: Image and Morality in the Twentieth Century* 20, qtd. in Rees-Roberts, "Raf Simons and Interdisciplinary Fashion from Post-Punk to Neo-Modern" 14). However, Lang quickly grew disenchanted by the growing consolidation of the fashion industry into conglomerates. When the Prada Group sought to consolidate its position as a leading luxury conglomerate at the end of the 1990s by acquiring labels and came knocking at Helmut Lang, he first ceded 51% of his company in 1999 and the remainder in 2004. He left the company the following year, retired from fashion, and has since been devoting himself to his work as an artist. As we argue in *Wiener Chic*, Lang's refusal to kowtow to global fashion's powers-that-be, maintaining instead a relationship to the fashion world resolutely on his own terms,[5] is indicative of, and in keeping with, the larger Viennese fashion system, just as the rest of the city's non-high culture, tourist-oriented cultural production exists in a state of relative invisibility globally (Ingram and Reisenleitner, *Wiener Chic* 161).

Figure 5 Helmut Lang boutique in Westbourne Grove, London (photo: S. Ingram)

Just as forces propelled Helmut Lang out of Vienna, so too did others attract Hedi Slimane to

Berlin. Slimane's fashion path ran more immediately through Paris than Lang's. Having studied art history at the École du Louvre, his initial participation in the fashion world was in the early 1990s as an assistant on a Louis Vuitton project to reimagine the brand. After a formative period with Yves Saint Laurent, during which he rose to the position of artistic director, Slimane, like Lang, gained fame by pioneering a rebellious, tight-legged look.[6] While Lang had brought a "punk, distressed look to the catwalk" in the 1990s (Arnold, "Heroin Chic" 286), "Slimane's reputation is founded on having streamlined and rejuvenated the male silhouette through the promotion of a skinny style appropriated from youth subcultures" during his tenure at Dior from 2000-2007 (Rees-Roberts, "Boys Keep Swinging" 7).[7] Rees-Roberts emphasizes, "Of [Slimane's] collections for Dior Homme, those in 2005 and 2006 are emblematic of his transposition of the revival English mod look made famous by the designer's unofficial muse at the time, musician Pete Doherty" (Rees-Roberts, "Boys Keep Swinging" 9), but he also cannot help but note "the figure of David Bowie looming large over Slimane's luxury transposition of street style, particularly the singer's incarnations in the mid- to late 1970s" (Rees-Roberts, "Boys Keep Swinging" 13). Calling on the evidence of Slimane's early photography, Rees-Roberts identifies the attraction as based on "[t]he retro allure of Eastern European militarism" (Rees-Roberts, "Boys Keep Swinging" 14), a regional focus that effaces the influence of Berlin and its urban imaginary.[8] After all, it was to Berlin that Slimane relocated after YSL was taken over by Gucci in 1999 and he learned he would have a new boss:

> Tom Ford, the creative director at Gucci, who insisted that Slimane report to him. "It was a totally new idea to me, this story of 'reporting,'" Slimane told me. (His English is good but not perfect.) "I might have never heard the word 'reporting' before. Reporting to Tom was not going to happen." Bergé objected to the arrangement, too. "I was absolutely against it," he told me. "Tom Ford is not my cup of tea. I don't respect him, not at all. He is not a designer. He is a marketing man." After meeting with Ford at the Ritz ("The situation became unpleasant," Slimane said), Slimane resigned. (Paumgarten)

Between 2000 and 2002 Slimane undertook an artistic residency at the Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, which resulted in his first photography book, *Berlin*, a glossy publication by Editions 7L/Steidl (the L stands for Lagerfeld), which contains images he took during his tenure in the city.

The importance of Bowie to Slimane, and of Berlin to that relationship, is not to be underestimated. In "Changes: Bowie's Life Story," her contribution to the *David Bowie Is…* catalogue, Oriole Cullen includes a quote by Bowie "[d]iscussing his approach to fashion in 2005": "Explaining that he was currently wearing clothes by one particular designer, he said, 'I just rely on Hedi Slimane […]. I've always been extremely lucky that there's always been some designer or other who wants to give me clothes. For the last little while Hedi Slimane has wardrobed me" (Cullen 258). Apparently Slimane sent some early designs to Bowie, who commented that "The stuff was apparently influenced by the film *The Man Who Fell to Earth,* and it was all that very slim-line black, and it's very much become his signature look" (qtd. in Cullen 258).[9] The *David Bowie Is…* catalogue includes images of the 2002 blue silk suit that Slimane designed for Bowie's *Heathen* tour, the same kind of skinny suit that

Karl Lagerfeld famously lost 90 pounds in order to be able to wear (Figure 6). When Slimane won the Council of Fashion Designers of America award for international designer in 2002 (the award Helmut Lang won in 1996), Bowie was there to present him with it.

Figure 6 Slimane-designed suit for Bowie (photo: S. Ingram)

The week Bowie died, in January 2016, Slimane posted images of Bowie that he had taken as part of his *Stage* project, which point to a decided sense of loss (Figure 7).[10] He also published a touchingly personal tribute to Bowie in the 2016 spring issue of the Victoria & Albert Museum's *V&A Magazine*, in which he confesses that Bowie was something of a talismanic, god-like figure for him:

> July 1975.
> I open my birthday present and I meet David for the first time, at the age of seven.
> David Live, recorded in Philadelphia one year before, is about to change my life.
> My sister's best friend, Veronique Jamin, puts the vinyl on my low-fi turntable.
> Veronique is fifteen, the prettiest thing.
> She wears a black vinyl jumpsuit and puts blue glitter
> on her eyes.
> She plays and sings along: Aladdin Sane.
> I am used to seeing her dancing, throwing back her beautiful hair, but this time it's different.
> This is about Bowie.
> I lie down on the bed and observe the double album cover, the powder-blue suspended suit
> of Freddie Buretti. The pale figure, the heroic posture, the slick electric hair.
> I look at David. I am not quite sure if it is a boy or a girl.
> I don't care. I am the same anyway.
> From this day, 5 July 1975, Bowie will protect me.
>
> 8 June 1983. Hippodrome d'Auteuil. My first concert.
> There are about 100,000 people. I am excited and scared at the same time by the raw energy
> of the crowd.
> I will never forget how I felt that day.
> I became a teenager when I walked into that venue.
> David takes the stage: The Jean Genie.
> 100,000 girls and boys like an ocean under a storm.
> Modern Love, and it's over. I will never be the same.
> My life was ahead of me.
>
> David died and left us alone.
> I lost my childhood, I lost my youth.
> Nothing will ever be the same. (Allwood) (cf. Victoria and Albert Museum).[11]

The anecdote depicted in the initial part of the poem seems to have been common knowledge, given that it was used to open a 2006 piece entitled "Pretty Things" in the *New Yorker*:

> Hedi Slimane sits alone in his room, in a pleasant but not very fashionable part of Paris, mooning over an album cover. He has just turned six. The year is 1974. The record, a birthday gift from a friend of his older sister, is "David Live"—David Bowie, recorded at the Tower Theatre in Philadelphia. The friend, Véronique, likes to put on a blue jumpsuit and imitate Bowie. She does a good Mick Jagger, too. Slimane is captivated by her. He is also captivated by the album cover, which features a photograph of Bowie onstage, dressed in a powder-blue double-breasted suit: the jacket is cut short, with narrow but square shoulders, and the pants, although pleated and billowy in the legs, are tight at the crotch. Bowie looks bloodless and emaciated, well on his way to his "Thin White Duke" phase, during which he subsisted, as he later said, on "peppers, cocaine, and milk." Taste has to come from somewhere. Thirty years later, after Slimane has become a celebrated fashion designer who occasionally claims that he has no precedents or influences—who declares, "I have no nostalgia"—he allows that his sensibility owes a lot to "David Live" and to the early sight of this cool and cadaverous androgyne striking an angular pose. "When you're a kid, you stare at things like this," he says. "There is a moment of isolation in your room—a moment, maybe, of boredom." There are many things that can contribute to a boy's sense that another world exists out there, but, in 1974, nothing quite beat album covers, David Bowie, or older girls in blue jumpsuits (Paumgarten).

In his poetic tribute to Bowie a decade later, Slimane returns to this scene to correct the year and his age—it was 1975 so he was seven not six, and the colour scheme—it was Veronique's eye glitter that was blue, not the jumpsuit, which was black vinyl. Calling her "the prettiest thing"

Figure 7 One of the images from Stages that Hedi Slimane republished on the occasion of Bowie's death. ("Hedi Slimane's Tribute to David Bowie")

both hearkens back to and makes explicit the reference in Nick Paumgarten's title to Bowie's "The Prettiest Star," one of the tracks on the 1973 *Aladdin Sane*. Its cover is the one featuring the colourful thunderbolt makeup that was selected from all of Bowie's albums for the cover of *David Bowie Is…* catalogue, but repurposed so that the eyes return the viewers' gaze for the catalogue

instead of remaining downturned as they were on the album cover.[12]

These connections encourage us to return to Slimane's Berlin residency. While he, like Bowie, had also lived in Los Angeles and New York, it is not those cities but rather the influence of Berlin and a key part of its urban imaginary that can be shown to provide a germinal link between the two. The images of Bowie that Slimane reproduced as a tribute were first taken in 2003 for his Stages project, that is, the year after his Berlin stay, after he had designed Bowie's *Heathen* tour suit, and Bowie had presented him with the Council of Fashion Designers of America award for international designer. Slimane's experiences during his artist residency in Berlin from 2000 to 2002 bear a striking resemblance to Bowie's heady stay in the city from 1976 to 1978. In both cases the artists were escaping situations that were not good for them (Bowie, Los Angeles; Slimane, YSL), and Berlin proved a fertile space for innovation. Slimane's Berlin stay resulted not only in the first of several photography books, but also exhibitions at the Kunstwerke, MOMA/PS1 in New York, and the Koyanagi Gallery in Tokyo. Like Bowie, Slimane was able to find inroads into the kind of locals he could relate to in Berlin, but not only in Berlin, of course. As noted in *The New Yorker*:

> Slimane also collects places. Paris bores him; it lacks a youth culture, or a sense of energetic disenchantment. He lives there because it is his home, and couture's. (He has an apartment on the Quai Voltaire, overlooking the Seine and the Louvre.) And so for stimulus he chooses other cities. Like David Bowie's humanoid alien in "The Man Who Fell to Earth," who came here to procure water for his own planet, Slimane spends a lot of his time in this or that town, quietly observing its citizens and ways, in order to extract its visual resources. In recent years, it's been London. He distills some kind of Londonness, filters it through a Paris atelier, and offers it back, in suspenders and fancy boots (Paumgarten).

When he first began at Dior, Slimane sent the locals he encountered in Berlin down the runway to change the look of men's fashion just as decisively as Bowie's Berlin albums changed the sound of pop music:

> Slimane is said to have transformed the male silhouette. He produced jackets that were cut short, with narrow, square shoulders, and teamed them with very skinny trousers – exquisitely made, super-tight tailoring that was designed with rock stars in mind, but was greeted with so many standing ovations on the catwalk that pretty soon everyone from Versace to Topman referenced Dior Homme in their collections (Davis).

No less an authoritative fashion figure than international editor Suzy Menkes claims to have sensed "an undercurrent of Berlin's unsettling history" in Slimane's Dior Homme shows, "and especially in [his] photographs—there is: dense darkness, danger, Weimar decadence, a grinding Communist regime, brutal buildings, shady cellars, nihilistic depravity" (Menkes), something that can also be heard in *Low*, *"Heroes,"* and *Lodger*, which are credited, in their experimental minimalism, with picking up on the dark currents that fascinated Bowie about the city and had brought him there (cf. T. J. Seabrook).

Bowie's influence on Slimane is reminiscent of Christopher Isherwood's on Bowie. Bowie was captivated by what had taken Isherwood to

Berlin in the 1930s, just as Slimane was by what had taken Bowie there in the 1970s. However, while Bowie was attracted to the dark historical elements of Berlin that Menkes describes, which he found in Isherwood's work as well as in German expressionist art,[13] Slimane seems to have

Figure 8 Christiane F. Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo (Images © 1981 Solaris Film, Maran Film, Popular Filmproduktion, CLV-Filmproduktions, Süddeutscher Rundfunk)

been attracted to the look emanating from Bowie's connection to the city, specifically the 1981 film *Christiane F/ Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo*. Christiane Felscherinow's teenage experiences with drugs and prostitution were first turned into a bestselling reportage by two *Stern* reporters, which Uli Edel then turned into a cult film that memorably featured a Bowie concert and soundtrack. Felscherinow has garnered, if not exactly enjoyed, a certain measure of renown ever since and recently published a memoir in an attempt to advocate for support and assistance for drug dependency, something she still struggles with (Felscherinow and Vukovich; cf. Ingram).

Befitting Felscherinow's cult status, it is not difficult to find images of her younger self online, and it is also not difficult to ascertain her lifestyle from them.[14] It is not just the case, however, that Felscherinow belonged to a slightly earlier version of the Berlin scene from which Slimane drew his inspiration. Rather, as is apparent from images online from *Christiane F: Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo*, it was the film version of her story, which features a cult-inducing soundtrack by Bowie, including "Heroes/ Helden" and "Boys Keep Swinging," from which Slimane drew his aesthetic inspiration (Figure 8, Figure 9). That so many black-and-white images of a *colour* film circulate online via Google images speaks to the broader popularity of this aesthetic, highly influential on Slimane and others.

While Slimane does not seem to have written any poems about the film or commented on it in

Figure 9 collage from Slimane's Berlin collection (S. Ingram)

interviews, one can see from the following images that it is not merely the heroin chic look of *Christiane F.* that is at issue, but rather a stance

Figure 10 Christiane F. Wir Kinder vom Bahnof Zoo, looking at Bowie poster (Images © 1981 Solaris Film, Maran Film, Popular Filmproduktion, CLV-Filmproduktions, Süddeutscher Rundfunk)

(Figure 10, Figure 11), one clearly associated in *Christiane F.* with Bowie and Bowie fandom—shooting from the back over the shoulder, a look which has become one of Slimane's trademarks (Figure 12, Figure 13).

In adopting this stance as one of his signature aesthetics, Slimane was making a *locational relation* to Bowie premised on a stylistic connection to "poor but sexy" Berlin, which served to establish him as the same kind of resisting artist as Bowie, interested in creating images and styles that run counter to representations of the dominant bourgeois order and that similarly propelled him to stardom.[15]

Figure 11 Christiane F. Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo, at the concert (Images © 1981 Solaris Film, Maran Film, Popular Filmproduktion, CLV-Filmproduktions, Süddeutscher Rundfunk)

This notion of locational relation can also help us to gauge the imaginative distance between Berlin and Vienna. I am not suggesting that Vienna has not, or cannot, serve as a site of counter-memories that work against the grain of the dominant representations of subjectivity. Indeed, *Wiener Chic* details where many such locations are to be found, which would have provided Helmut Lang with the type of fashion space he was seeking had they existed while he lived there. Whether the detectives in *Soko Donau*, who solve crimes involving people and substances trafficked into and out of Vienna and its surroundings (Figure 14); the Iranian migrant in *I Love Vienna* (Houchang Allahyari, 1991), who has to help his sister and son find their way in their new and not exactly hospitable environment (Figure 15); or the musician who has to extricate himself from shady dealings involving pirated Whitney Houston CDs in *Blutrausch* (Thomas Roth, 1997, Figure 16); they all find themselves in locations that work against the grain of, rather than in conjunction with, the city's dominant representation of imperial splendour. When they take to land, the *Soko Donau* detectives do not ride in the kind of style

Figure 12 One of the images of Bowie from the back from the Stage collection that Slimane republished on the occasion of Bowie's death

Figure 13 random collage of Slimane photos (S. Ingram)

Figure 14 Soko Donau on water (Images © 2008 ZDF and ORF)

Figure 17 Soko Donau on land (Images © 2008 ZDF and ORF)

Figure 15 arriving at the Südbahnhof in I Love Vienna (Images © 1991 epo-film)

Figure 18 leaving the hotel in the 2nd district in I Love Vienna (Images © 1991 epo-film)

Figure 16 the Beisl in Blutrausch (Images © 1997 Dor Film Produktionsgesellschaft/ Österreichischer Runkfunk (ORF)

Figure 19 concert in the Arena (Images © 1997 Dor Film Produktionsgesellschaft/ Österreichischer Runkfunk (ORF)

Figure 20 irreverent treatment of statue in I Love Vienna (Images © 1991 epo-film)

one traditionally associates with the city: the Fiaker or horse-drawn carriage (Figure 17); the Iranian migrants find themselves housed in one of the city's seedier districts with prostitutes for neighbours—the 2. Leopoldstadt, which has in the meantime undergone substantial gentrification (Figure 18, cf. Suitner); and the *Blutrausch* musician, who is played by Ostbahn Kurti, one of Vienna's most colourful countercultural characters, ends up in bondage after being abducted at a punk concert at the Arena (Figure 19). Even when tourist sites do appear in these productions, they are rubbed against the grain to show how little the imperial histories they stand for matter in the lives of contemporary residents from and on the peripheries (Figure 20).

However, because these popular culture productions have remained peripheral to Vienna's high-culture reputation, on which its tourist status as a European capital of culture rests, they have not been able to provide an enticing enough environment to lure Lang back to Vienna from the idyll of Long Island, where he has resided since retiring from fashion and devoting himself to art.[16] At least not yet permanently. Lang's most recent solo exhibition, "Various Conditions," was in the Stadtraum Gallery in Vienna and the Sammlung Friedrichshof in the Burgenland in the summer and fall of 2017 (http://www.h-lang.studio), so it is not impossible that he may relocate back to Austria at some point, just as Veruschka returned to Berlin from Brooklyn in the aftermath of 9/11 with the second Bush presidency.

Urban imaginaries are by no means static constructions. The gentrification Berlin is currently experiencing may eventually undermine its "poor but sexy" reputation. The Ramones Museum in Berlin is now in its third location and may well end up having to decamp yet again to a more affordable space, either on the city's periphery or outside the city altogether (Figure 21).[17] What seems certain at this point is that the likeliness of its moving to Vienna is comparable with the likeliness of Helmut Lang returning to the city—for precisely the same reason: they would not feel comfortable with, or want to be seen as aligned with, the contours and shadings of the faded splendor of Vienna's imperial imaginary, which still remains largely untouched by the Viennese productions mentioned here and stuck in "the world of yesterday" that once housed great writers such as Zweig, Wittgenstein, Freud, and Schnitzler, and from which a resistant fashion designer such as Helmut Lang has in the past gone to great lengths to distance himself.[18] That Berlin has bought into the understanding of itself as a place in Braidotti's sense of a set of counter-memories can be seen in its championing of its Bowie connection: the building at Hauptstrasse 154-155, in which Bowie lived during his stay in the city in the 1970s, now has a commemorative plaque on it and the street is now called "David Bowie Strasse," at least on postcards (Figure 22). Indeed, given the centrality of the countercultural imaginary of Berlin that attracted Bowie and Slimane in motoring the city's current gentrification, one has to question in how far it can truly be considered

Figure 21 Flo Hayler in front of the original Ramones Museum location in Kreuzberg (courtesy of Flo Hayler)

countercultural and not simply imaginary, in the psychoanalytic sense—that is, the realm through which the ego is constituted in a fantasy-driven process of narcissistic identification. What can be concluded is, as has been demonstrated here by illustrating this contribution as lavishly as it has been, no matter how Berlin's and Vienna's urban imaginaries continue to evolve, the stylistic index of fashion will be able to help establish their locational relationality.

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Figure 22 a postcard showing a street sign at Hauptstrasse 154/155, taken in January 2016 by Ute Volz (photo: S. Ingram)

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Notes

1 My work on Berlin and Vienna has been bolstered over the years by more conference engagement than can be enumerated here, but I would like to acknowledge the support of the co-editors of this special volume, Katrina Sark and Elena Siemens, as well as general editor Markus Reisenleitner. *Imaginations*' extremely well informed peer reviewers were also very helpful in getting me to nuance and expand on key aspects of this piece and, in particular, to clarify its focus on the cities and not the designers. I hope it is now clear how this focus supports the piece's implicit feminist, new materialist approach. I should also mention that the title is a deliberate mashing of the titles of two David Bowie songs: "Boy Keep Swinging" and "Where are We Now?" My title is therefore not a plagiarizing of Rees-Roberts, "Boys Keep Swinging"; rather, it is the case that we are both alluding to the same song.

2 To provide a sense of how these statistics fit in in terms of Europe: as of December 2016, there were over 1400 images on the site for both Paris and Milan, 535 for Florence, 327 for London, 129 for Stockholm, 42 for Rome, 36 for Madrid, 31 for Moscow, 21 for Barcelona, 10 for Munich, and 9 for Hamburg, 6 for Brussels, and 2 for St Petersburg. Outside of Europe, there are 48 for Sydney, 16 for Melbourne, 61 for Tokyo, 9 for Beijing, 5 for Shanghai, 12 for Los Angeles, and 7 for Santa Fe. In the Canadian context, there are 4 for Toronto, 3 for Vancouver, and 1 for Montreal. That Scott Schumann's home base of NYC has the most (1531) of any city I checked is, of course, what one would expect.

3 My thanks to *Imaginations*' reviewers for suggesting I explicitly engage with these works. They proved very helpful in clarifying my focus.

4 Lang's associations with Vienna are enumerated in the "Designer Chic" chapter of the Vienna volume of the Urban Chic series (Ingram and Reisenleitner, *Wiener Chic*). I do not want to be misunderstood to be suggesting that Lang has come to be known as either a "Viennese" or an "Austrian" designer. On the contrary, it is his particular form of cosmopolitanism and its lack of relation to either Vienna or Austria that I am seeking to clarify here. If one wants to locate his lack of connection to the city, one could do so by noting that he has described the adolescence he spent in the city with his father and mother-in-law as "the most unhappy period of my life" (J. Seabrook, qtd. in Ingram and Reisenleitner, *Wiener Chic* 161).

5 An example of Lang's intransigence is his not appearing in person to accept CFDA's Menswear Designer of the Year award in 1996, which "was not taken kindly by the industry: 'We all have to do things we won't want to sometimes,' said André Leon Tally, the editor-at-large of *Vogue*. Anna Wintour described Helmut's decision as 'a mistake. […]. If I had known he wasn't coming, I would have called him. It was discourteous not to turn up" (J. Seabrook qtd. in Ingram and Reisenleitner, Wiener Chic 162–63).

6 Slimane's penchant for reinventing brands is indeed, as one of the peer reviewers mentioned, noteworthy: first, "rebranding […] the Dior menswear line (from the fusty Christian Dior Monsieur to the hip Dior Homme" (Rees-Roberts, "Boys Keep

Swinging" 7), then updating Yves Saint Laurent to the slicker Saint Laurent, and most recently redesigning Céline's logo to remove the accent.

7 Another designer relevant to the discussion of post-punk subculture's influence on fashion, as Nick Rees-Roberts has noted, is Raf Simons (Rees-Roberts, "Raf Simons and Interdisciplinary Fashion from Post-Punk to Neo-Modern").

8 This is not to deny that Berlin was a base for Bowie's orientation to Eastern Europe, which one can see perhaps most clearly in "Warszawa" (Gliński), but only to insist on Berlin's centrality.

9 Again, I would not want to be misunderstood as suggesting that the Slimane-Bowie relationship was exclusive. Of course, Bowie wore clothes by other designers, just as Slimane designed for other singers and bands. What I am trying to flag as significant is the historical moment of their intersection and the role of Berlin on that relation.

10 They can all be viewed at "Hedi Slimane's Tribute to David Bowie". A few also appear in "Stage 2, June 2003" Rock Diary, Hedi Slimane.com (https://www.hedislimane.com/diary/).

11 I reproduce the poem in whole not only because it is not easy to come by but also so that others can expand on the limited reading I can offer here, as my topic is their Berlin connection. There is much more work to be mined from Bowie's influence on Slimane and the shift to English that this poem represents.

12 For the power of Bowie's early LP covers, see Breward.

13 His paintings in this style were on display in the Berlin room of the "David Bowie Is…" exhibition.

14 More difficult to ascertain is the copyright status, so instead of reproducing them, I refer readers to a site where they are collected: www.pinterest.at/pin/558094578794512261/.

15 Not all celebrities aspire to bourgeois values like the Kardashians. While it is true that Bowie did "settle down" in the final part of his life, he did not do so in a suburban Calabasas way but rather skewered that lifestyle in his late work, such as the video for "The Stars Are Out Tonight." Neither do Slimane or Lang ascribe to suburban family values. Both encourage the practice of non-mainstream critically artistic existences.

16 It is intriguing, as one of the peer reviewers noted, that Lang retreated to the American east coast, while Slimane has gravitating toward the west coast, spending his break between Dior and Saint Laurent in Los Angeles, where he completed the photography collection *California Song*, and then moving the majority of Saint Laurent's design studio to the city during his stint as the label's creative director (Ingram and Reisenleitner, *L.A. Chic* 3). Putting Arnold's and Rees-Roberts's work on punk and post-punk together, one could make an argument for the importance of generation. That Lang is 12 years older meant that he was confronted with the onset of the consolidation of the global fashion system into conglomerates such as LVMH (see Mavrody) after he had already established his own brand and was therefore in a position to walk away from the industry to a sheltered, upscale artist's studio in a setting that reminded him of his happy childhood in the Austrian alps. Slimane, on the other hand, had to make his way through the throes of this consolidation and uses the fact that he does not have his own fashion label to take time out between his fashion gigs to cultivate his artistic pursuits, particularly photography.

17 See Ingram and Sark 172–74 for an account of the first two locations.

18 An example of an Austrian fashion designer who has embraced that world of yesterday is the Graz-born Lena Hoschek, who is known for her fashion-forward dirndls.